

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Questions to Portfolio Holders

### Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 4 April 2024

#### **Question received from Councillor Salt:**

**Q1.** *Can the Portfolio Holder for Assets reassure Biddulph District Councillors that they are willing to fund the reinstatement of the miner's lamps that will be returned to District Council land and agree to look after their maintenance moving forwards?"*

#### **Response from Councillor Atkins Portfolio Holder for Services:-**

SMDC is paying for the reinstatement of the Miner's Lamps up to an agreed maximum value. The ongoing maintenance is the subject of further discussion and agreement.

#### **Question received from Councillor Malyon:**

Q2: Could the portfolio holder update us on how the disabled grant monies are being applied for and if they are not what is the council doing to ensure they will be spent so that people can have a better quality of life?

#### **Response from Councillor Atkins Portfolio Holder for Services:-**

Applications for DFG Funding across Staffordshire are made initially to the County Council, where eligible cases are triaged and then referred directly to the relevant local authorities. At Staffordshire Moorlands, our service provider is Alliance Norse and they will then engage with the applicant to prepare the case and procure, approve, manage and pay for the required works. There are tight response times for Alliance Norse case workers and the Occupational Therapist to contact and prepare the client case, and they work in conjunction with partner organisation (N-Able) to obtain quotes and allocate work as quickly as practicable, in proportion to the complexity of the case and the scale of the adaptation.

For SMDC, the budget for 2023/24 was £1,774,000 and, based on the outturn figures for Alliance Norse year one, this budget has been exceeded by the number of applications received. This means that not only has the annual prescribed budget been accounted for, but that inroads have also been made into the Council's DFG reserve funding from previous years. Demand for adaptation funding is growing year on year and, now that we have an organisation that is effectively and quickly dealing with adaptation cases, there is no doubt that the annual funding for mandatory adaptations will be fully committed going forward.

We also have a suite of discretionary Adaptation funding to help individuals and communities access grant funding that perhaps would have been difficult to obtain under the mandatory regime, and this funding programme complements the mandatory process so that people living with disability can not only access and remain independent in their own homes, but can also take part in community activities and initiatives where community premises have applied for funding to improve access to their facilities. For 2023/24, just under £240,000 was approved for discretionary cases

on top of the mandatory programme, and this is an area we are keen to expand on over the next 12 months to 2 years.